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WEARDALE
Rural District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE
Medical Officer of Health
FOR THE YEAR 1947.

CROOK
LINTONS, PRINTERS CHURCH STREET.

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Weardale Rural District Council.

Report of Medical Officer of Health for 1947.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Herewith I beg to submit my Annual Report for 1947.

SECTION A.

Statistics and Social Conditions.

Area of District, 99,652 Acres

Registrar-General's estimate of population, 8,790

Number of inhabited houses at end of year, 2,917.

Rateable Value, £46,677.

Sum represented by a penny rate, £179 19s. 1.36d.

Employment continued good throughout the year. Wolsingham Steel Works maintained its rate of production. Limestone, ganister and sand quarries have maintained a good rate of production. Lime for agricultural purposes is still produced at Broadwood and Stanhope Burn.

In Stanhope Dene, Fluorspar Limited are still expanding and increasing the number of employees.

Messrs Geo. Blair & Co. (Tow Law) have converted an old engine shed into a small foundry for light castings.

Wages have maintained their high level and there has been no destitution.

Vital Statistics.

BIRTHS.

There were 152 total births (alive and still)

Live Births	...	147
Still Births	...	5
		152

LIVE BIRTHS.

		Male	Female
Legitimate	...	80	62
Illegitimate	...	1	4
		81	66

STILL BIRTHS.

Legitimate	...	2	2
Illegitimate	...	1	--
		3	2

On an estimated population of 8,790 these figures give the following rates for 1,000 population:—

Total Births	...	17.3
Live Births	...	16.7
Still Births	...	0.57

The rates for England and Wales were:—

Live Births	...	20.5 per 1000 population.
Still Births	...	0.50 per 1000 population.

The total birth rate remains the same as last year. The live birth rate has increased while the still birth rate has dropped to half the figures for 1946 (1.2 per 1000).

DEATHS.

The number of deaths registered as pertaining to this district were:—

Males	...	61
Females	...	62
Total	...	123

These figures give a total death rate per 1,000 population of 14.0 The death rate for England and Wales was 12.0 per 1,000 population.

MATERNAL DEATHS.

There were no maternal deaths during the year.

INFANTILE DEATHS.

These numbered 3 and were as follows:—

		Male	Female
Legitimate	...	3	0
Illegitimate	...	0	0
Total	...	3	0

These figures give a morality rate of per 1,000 Live Births of 20.4

The rate for England and Wales is 41 per 1,000 Live Births.

DEATHS FROM CANCER.

These numbered 21, which represents 17.1 per cent of all deaths and a cancer death rate of 2.4 per 1,000 population.

DEATHS FROM MEASLES, Nil.

DEATHS FROM WHOOPING COUGH, Nil.

DEATHS FROM DIARRHOEA (under 2 years) Nil.

CAUSES OF DEATH

CAUSES OF DEATH				Males.	Females.
All Causes				61	62
1	Typhoid and Paratyphoid fever	...	...	0	0
2	Cerebro-spinal fever	...	...	0	0
3	Scarlet Fever	...	...	0	0
4	Whooping Cough	...	...	0	0
5	Diphtheria	...	...	0	0
6	Tuberculosis, respiratory	...	...	4	1
7	Other Tuberculosis	..	...	0	0
8	Syphilitic diseases	...	...	0	0
9	Influenza	..	...	0	1
10	Measles	...	...	0	0
11	Polio-myelitis and Polio-encephalitis	..	...	0	0
12	Infantile Encephalitis	...	...	0	0
13	Cancer of buccal cavity & oesophagus (M)	...	...	0	
	Cancer of uterus (F)	...	...		3
14	Cancer of stomach & duodenum	...	...	0	1
15	Cancer of breast	...	...	0	0
16	Cancer of other sites	...	...	13	4
17	Diabetes	...	...	0	1
18	Intra-cranial vascular lesions	...	..	7	12
19	Heart disease	...	...	16	21
20	Other circulatory diseases	...	...	1	0
21	Bronchitis	...	...	1	2
22	Pneumonia	...	..	1	0
23	Other respiratory diseases	...	...	0	1
24	Ulcer of stomach & duodenum	...	...	0	0
25	Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	...	...	0	0
26	Appendicitis	...	...	2	0
27	Other digestive diseases	.	...	2	2
28	Nephritis	...	...	3	3
29	Puerperal & post-abortion sepsis	—	...	0	0
30	Other maternal causes	..	...	0	0
31	Premature birth	..	...	1	0
32	Congen. malformation, birth injury and infantile diseases	...	...	1	0
33	Suicide	...	...	0	0
34	Road traffic accidents	...	...	1	0
35	Other violent causes	...	...	1	1
36	All other causes	...	...	7	9
Total				61	62

Appended are the birth rates and death rates for the preceeding seven years:—

	Birthrate	Deathrate
1940	13.3	16.6
1941	14.2	12.9
1942	12.7	11.2
1943	13.6	13.9
1944	16.7	14.2
1945	11.4	10.8
1946	17.3	14.1
1947	17.3	14.1

SECTION B.

General Provision of Health Services.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

MEDICAL.

Medical Officer of Health (part-time)

DONALD THOMSON, O.B.E., M.B.

Tuberculosis Medical Officer

Venereal Diseases Medical Officer

School Medical Officer

Maternity and Child Welfare Medical Officer

Obstetric Consultants

} Under
Durham County
Council

OTHERS

Sanitary Inspector,

R. G. SUDDICK, Cert. R.S.I., Lond. (whole time)

Veterinary Surgeon

Public Analyst

Health Visitor

} Under Durham County Council.

LABORATORY FACILITIES.

Bacteriological examinations of sputum, throat swabs and blood for diagnosis of Tuberculosis, Diphtheria and Typhoid Fever are carried out at the Public Health Laboratories, King's College, Newcastle-on-Tyne. In addition other examinations are carried out when necessary. e.g. Examination of urine and faeces and virulence tests. This valuable work is carried out at the expense of the Durham County Council.

Every practitioner in the District can make use of these facilities and a copy of every report is sent to the Medical Officer of Health.

During the year 103 such examinations were carried out.

The bacteriological examinations for the Isolation Hospital are done by the Clinical Research Association, London.

During the year 18 such examinations were carried out.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

(i) Most householders in the District subscribe 5/- per annum to the Weardale Ambulance Association, whose motor ambulance is stationed at St. John's Chapel. This entitles each household to four journeys per year to Newcastle-on-Tyne at a cost of 5/- per journey. Journeys are made only with bona fide stretcher cases.

(ii) For the transport of cases of Infectious Diseases a motor ambulance car is maintained by this Council at its Isolation Hospital.

(iii) The quarry workers through their union, have a separate arrangement for the services of a motor ambulance car from Tow Law for stretcher cases and payment of train, bus or taxi fares for less serious cases. These facilities are available to the workers and their families.

(iv) Wolsingham Steel Works have provided their own ambulance which has been made available to the families of employees living in Wolsingham and Frosterley.

(v) At Hunstanworth a local association exists which provides at reduced charges the private hire of an ambulance to its subscribers when required.

NURSING IN THE HOME.

The whole of the Area with the exception of Stanhope and the sparsely inhabited neighbourhood of Hunstanworth is provided with district Nurse-Midwives, working under local Nursing Associations. These are all affiliated to and subsidised by the Durham County Nursing Association. At Stanhope the general nursing is done by a district nurse who is not maternity trained. Maternity cases are attended by the County Council midwife stationed at Frosterley.

At Hunstanworth a local Association subscribes to the neighbouring association in Northumberland and thus have the services of the Carterway Heads Nurse Midwife when required.

TREATMENT CENTRES.

Maternity and Child Welfare centres are in operation at Wolsingham, Stanhope and St. John's Chapel. A Venereal Diseases Clinic at Durham and a Tuberculosis Clinic at Bishop Auckland are available for the district. These are all under County Council control.

HOSPITALS.

There is no general hospital in the area. By far the greater part of the cases requiring hospital treatment are sent to the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle upon Tyne which receives a fair amount of support from the District.

SECTION C.

Sanitary Circumstances and General Provision of Health Services in the Area.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Despite the prolonged drought of the summer months, the water supplies were well maintained and no serious shortage arose.

The following improvements were carried out: —

Frosterley - Water main through the river Wear to Bridge End was relaid in 3in. asbestos cement pressure pipes, encased in concrete.

Hill End - 1½in. branch main bored.
1in. branch main relaid.

Stanhope - Recording Meters installed on supply mains.

119 repairs to services etc., were carried out by your workmen.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.

There are no changes to report with regard to the sewage disposal works in the Area.

Stoppages in sewers and drains were cleared on 38 instances by your workmen.

RIVERS AND STREAMS.

Complaints were investigated in company with the County Health Inspector.

Action was taken by the County Authorities following a complaint regarding the pollution of Harthopeburn arising from quarrying operations.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

The closets of each type remaining at the end of 1947 are :—

Water Closets	...	1319
Ash-closets	...	871
Ashpit-privies	...	307

20 applicants took advantage of the Council's scheme for a grant of half the cost up to a maximum of £8, towards converting existing sanitary accommodation to the water carriage system.

SALVAGE.

The collection of salvage (paper, rags, scrap iron etc) was continued. The amounts sold were as follows :—

		Tons	Cwts	Qrs
Paper	...	10	13	0
Scrap Iron	...	4	1	2
Rags	...		12	0

PUBLIC CLEANSING

The estimated weight of refuse removed during the year amounted to 4,268 tons and the mileage covered by the cleansing vehicles was 21,311 miles.

Refuse was disposed of at Sawmill Lane, Wolsingham; Thornley Village; Greenfoot, Stanhope; Crawleyside, Cowshill and Rookhope.

RATS AND MICE DESTRUCTION ACT 1910.

Under the transfer of powers inaugurated by the Ministry of Food, the Council employ a whole time Rodent Officer and treatment of sewers and refuse tips and block control of properties was carried out during the year.

The number of rats estimated to have been killed according to the Ministry of Food formula were as follows:—

Sewers	...	405
Refuse Tips	...	495
Block Control	...	4068

SHOPS ACT—Ventilation and Temperature.

No action taken.

SMOKE ABATEMENT.

No action taken.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF AREA

Nature of Inspections	Number	Notices Informal	Formal	Complied with
Infectious diseases	46		-	-
Disinfection	46	-	.	-
Nuisances	5	5	-	5
Dwellings	92	18	1	19
Cowsheds	54	3	-	3
Bakehouses	10	-		-
Sanitary accommodation	69	9	-	9
Water Supply	85	4		4
Pigsties	2	-	-	-
House Drainage	39	9	-	9
Other Nuisances	8	1	3	4

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

(a) Milk Supply

Inspections were carried out in collaboration with County Officials and samples of milk were taken on four occasions after

premises had been certified as suitable for producing "Designated" milk. Two "Tuberculin Tested" and two "Accredited" Producers licences were granted by the County Medical Officer of Health.

Inspections were also carried out in connection with applications for registration to produce ordinary milk. Three farms were registered during the year.

Number of Farms producing "Tuberculin" Tested Milk	16
Number of Farms producing "Accredited" Milk	15
Number of Farms on Register	504

(b) Meat and Other Foods

No slaughtering for sale is done in the district under existing conditions.

Visits have been carried out to shops and stores in the district and these are generally well kept.

Food was condemned as unfit for sale or human consumption on twelve instances. In each case the food was surrendered voluntarily under Ministry of Food Regulations.

There are five bakehouses in the district. These are clean and satisfactory.

SECTION D.

Housing

Four traditional type houses were completed and occupied at Willard Grove East, Stanhope, during the year, being part of a contract for 21 houses (8 at Stanhope, 5 at Frosterley and 8 at Wolsingham). The remaining houses were all in course of erection.

A further contract of 16 houses to be erected at Wolsingham was let and the work commenced.

Further schemes consisting of 8 houses at Westgate and 4 at St. John's Chapel were also being prepared.

Schemes for the erection of "Airey" type houses were also being prepared, such schemes including proposals to erect six at Rookhope and ten at Frosterley.

Advance housing site preparation (construction of roads and sewers) under a Direct Labour Scheme was commenced at Rookhope, Frosterley, Westgate and Wolsingham.

Three houses erected by Private Enterprise were completed and occupied at Wolsingham.

SECTION E.

Prevalance of, and control over, Infectious Disease

I received 91 notifications during the year, these were as follows:—

Disease.	Total cases notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Smallpox	0	0	0
Scarlet fever	44	40	0
Pneumonia	9	0	1
Measles	19	0	0
Diphtheria	2	1	0
Erysipelas	1	0	0
Whooping Cough	12	0	0
Para-Typhoid Fever	0	0	0
Puerperal Fever	0	0	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	0	0
Meningitis	0	0	0
Poliomyelitis	3	3	0
Total	91	44	1

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

During the year 103 Children were immunised by the practitioners of the District.

Of the 1860 children under 15 years in the district 1231 are now immunised against Diphtheria. This gives a protection rate of 66.2 per cent.

Children of school age in the District total 1220 and of these 918 (75.3 per cent) are immunised.

Children under school age in the District total 640 and of these 313 (48.9 per cent) are immunised.

Only two cases of diphtheria were notified in the District during the year. This low incidence is no doubt due to the high rate of protection among school Children.

TUBERCULOSIS

Age Periods.			New Cases.				Deaths.			
			Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
			M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0	...	...								
1	...	...			1					
5	...	...		1						
15	...	...	1	1		1				
25	...	...	1	1			1	1		
35	...	...								
45	...	...								
55	...	...					1			
65 and upward	...	...					1			
Totals ...			2	3	1	1	3	1	0	0

In all 7 notifications were received. Of these 5 were for Tuberculosis of the Lungs and 2 were for Tuberculosis of other parts of the body.

Of the 4 deaths due to Tuberculosis 4 were the result of Tuberculosis of the chest.

The Tuberculosis Death Rate for the year was 0.4 per 1,000 population.

I am,

Yours obediently

DONALD THOMSON.

